

§ 115C-64.16. The Education and Workforce Innovation Program.

(a) Program Establishment. – There is established the Education and Workforce Innovation Program (Program) to foster innovation in education that will lead to more students graduating career and college ready. Funds appropriated to the Program shall be used to award competitive grants to an individual school, a local school administrative unit, or a regional partnership of more than one local school administrative unit to advance comprehensive, high-quality education that equips teachers with the knowledge and skill required to succeed with all students. Before receiving a grant, applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- (1) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with either a public or private university or a community college.
 - (2) Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with regional businesses and business leaders.
 - (3) Demonstrate the ability to sustain innovation once grant funding ends.
- (b) Applicant Categories and Specific Requirements. –
- (1) Individual schools. – Individual public schools must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Partnerships with business and industry to determine the skills and competencies needed for students' transition into growth sectors of the regional economy.
 - b. Aligned pathways to employment, including students' acquisition of college credit or industry recognized credentials.
 - c. Development of systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement.
 - (2) Local school administrative units. – Local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation.
 - b. Appointment of a senior leader to manage and sustain the change process with a specific focus on providing parents with a portfolio of meaningful options among schools.
 - (3) Regional partnerships of two or more local school administrative units. – Partnerships of two or more local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:
 - a. Implementation of resources of partnered local school administrative units in creating a tailored workforce development system for the regional economy and fostering innovation in each of the partnered local school administrative units.
 - b. Promotion of the development of knowledge and skills in career clusters of critical importance to the region.
 - c. Benefits of the shared strengths of local businesses and higher education.
 - d. Usage of technology to deliver instruction over large geographic regions and build networks with industry.
 - e. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation that can be replicated in other local school administrative units.
- (c) Consideration of Factors in Awarding of Grants. – All applications must include information on at least the following in order to be considered for a grant:
- (1) Describe the aligned pathways from school to high-growth careers in regional economies.

- (2) Leverage technology to efficiently and effectively drive teacher and principal development, connect students and teachers to online courses and resources, and foster virtual learning communities among faculty, higher education partners, and business partners.
- (3) Establish a comprehensive approach to enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators to successfully implement the proposed innovative program and to graduate all students ready for work and college.
- (4) Link to a proven provider of professional development services for teachers and administrators capable of providing evidence-based training and tools aligned with the goals of the proposed innovative program.
- (5) Form explicit partnerships with businesses and industry, which may include business advisory councils, internship programs, and other customized projects aligned with relevant workforce skills.
- (6) Partner with community colleges or public or private universities to enable communities to challenge every student to graduate with workplace credentials or college credit.
- (7) Align K-12 and postsecondary instruction and performance expectations to reduce the need for college remediation courses.
- (8) Secure input from parents to foster broad ownership for school choice options and to foster greater understanding of the need for continued education beyond high school.
- (9) Provide a description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for five years.
- (10) Describe the source of matching funds required in subsection (d) of this section.
- (11) Establish a strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.

(d) Matching Private and Local Funds. – All grant applicants must match fifty percent (50%) of all State dollars. Matching funds shall not include other State funds. Matching funds may include in-kind contributions.

(e) Grants. – Any grants awarded by the Commission may be spent over a five-year period from the initial award. Grants may be awarded for new or existing projects.

(f) Reporting Requirements. – No later than September 1 of each year, a grant recipient shall submit to the Commission an annual report for the preceding grant year that describes the academic progress made by the students and the implementation of program initiatives. (2013-360, s. 8.34(a); 2014-100, ss. 23.1(b), (d); 2014-115, s. 48.)